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By *ADAM FITZ-ADAM.*

To be continued every THURSDAY.

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MOST people complain of fortune; few of nature: and the kinder they think the latter has been to them, the more they murmur at what they call the injuſtice of the former.

WHY have not I the riches, the rank, the power of ſuch and ſuch, is the common expoſtulation with fortune: but why have not I the merit, the talents, the wit, or the beauty of ſuch and ſuch others, is a reproach rarely or never made to nature.

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THE truth is, that nature, ſeldom profuſe, and ſeldom niggardly, has diſtributed her gifts more equally than ſhe is generally ſuppoſed to have done. Education and ſituations make the great difference. Culture improves, and occaſions elicit natural talents. I make no doubt but that there are potentially (if I may uſe that pedantic word) many Bacons, Lockes, Newtons, Cæſars, Cromwells and Marlboroughs, at the plough-tail, behind counters, and, perhaps, even among the nobility. But the ſoil muſt be cultivated, and the ſeaſons favourable, for the fruit to have all it's ſpirit and flavour.

IF ſometimes our common parent has been a little partial, and not kept the ſcales quite even; if one preponderates too much, we throw into the lighter a due counterpoiſe of vanity, which never fails to ſet all right. Hence it happens, that hardly any one man would, without reſerve, and in every particular, change with any other.

THOUGH all are thus ſatisfied with the diſpenſations of nature, how few liſten to her voice? How few follow her as their guide? In vain ſhe points out to us the plain and direct way to truth; vanity, fancy, affectation and faſhion aſſume her ſhape, and wind us through fairy-ground to folly and error.

THESE deviations from nature are *often* attended by ſerious ill conſequences, and *always* by ridiculous ones: for there is nothing truer than the trite obſervation, "that "people are never ridiculous for being what they really are,

"are, but for affecting to appear what they really are not." Affectation is the only ſource, and at the ſame time, the only juſtifiable object of ridicule. No man whatever, be his pretenſions what they will, has a natural right to be ridiculous: it is an acquired right, and not to be acquired without ſome induſtry: which perhaps is the reaſon, why ſo many people are ſo jealous, and tenacious of it.

EVEN ſome people's VICES are not their own, but affected and adopted (though at the ſame time unenjoyed) in hopes of ſhining in thoſe faſhionable ſocieties, where the reputation of certain vices gives luſtre. In theſe caſes, the execution is commonly as awkward, as the deſign is abſurd; and the ridicule equals the guilt.

THIS calls to my mind a thing that really happened not many years ago. A young fellow of ſome rank and fortune, juſt let looſe from the univerſity, reſolved, in order to make a figure in the world, to aſſume the ſhining character of, what he called, a rake. By way of learning the rudiments of his intended profeſſion, he frequented the theatres, where he was often drunk, and always noiſy. Being one night at the repreſentation of that moſt abſurd play, the *Libertine Deſtroyed*, he was ſo charmed with the profligacy of the hero of the piece, that to the edification of the audience, he ſwore many oaths that he would be the Libertine *deſtroyed*. A diſcreet friend of his, who ſate by him, kindly repreſented to him, that to be the *Libertine* was a laudable deſign, which he greatly approved of; but that to be the Libertine *deſtroyed*, ſeemed to him an unneceſſary part of his plan,

plan, and rather raſh. He perſiſted, however, in his firſt reſolution, and inſiſted upon being the Libertine, and *deſtroyed*. Probably he was ſo; at leaſt the preſumption is in his favour. There are, I am perſuaded, ſo many caſes of this nature, that for my own part, I would deſire no greater ſtep towards the reformation of manners for the next twenty years, than that people ſhould have no vices but *their own*

THE blockhead who affects wiſdom, becauſe nature has given him dulneſs, becomes ridiculous only by his adopted character; whereas he might have ſtagnated unobſerved in his native mud, or perhaps have engroſſed deeds, collected ſhells, and ſtudied heraldry, or logic, with ſome ſucceſs.

THE ſhining coxcomb aims at all, and decides finally upon every thing, becauſe nature has given him pertneſs. The degree of parts, and animal ſpirits, neceſſary to conſtitute that character, if properly applied, might have made him uſeful in many parts of life; but his affectation and preſumption make him uſeleſs in moſt, and ridiculous in all.

THE ſeptuagenary fine gentleman might, probably, from his long experience and knowledge of the world, be eſteemed and reſpected in the ſeveral relations of domeſtic life, which, at his age, nature points out to him: but he will moſt ridiculouſly ſpin out the rotten thread of his former gallantries. He dreſſes, languiſhes, ogles, as he did at five and twenty; and modeſtly intimates that he is not without a *bonne fortune*; which *bonne fortune* at

laſt

he appears to be the proſtitute he had long kept (not to himſelf) whom he marries and owns, becauſe *the poor girl was ſo fond of him, and ſo deſirous to be made an honeſt woman.*

THE ſexagenary widow remembers that ſhe was handſome, but forgets that it was thirty years ago, and thinks herſelf ſo, or at leaſt very *likeable*, ſtill. The pardonable affectations of her youth and beauty, unpardonably continue, increaſe even with her years, and are doubly exerted in hopes of concealing the number. All the gawdy glittering parts of dreſs, which rather degraded than adorned her beauty in it's bloom, now expoſe to the higheſt and the juſteſt ridicule, her ſhrivelled or her overgrown carcaſe. She totters or ſweats under the load of her jewels, embroideries and brocades, which, like ſo many Egyptian hieroglyphics, ſerve only to authenticate the venerable antiquity of her auguſt mummy. Her eyes dimly twinkle tenderneſs, or leer deſire: their language, however inelegant, is intelligible; and the half-pay captain underſtands it. He addreſſes his vows to her vanity, which aſſures her that they are ſincere. She pities him, and prefers him to credit, decency and every ſocial duty. He tenderly prefers Her (though not without ſome heſitation) to a Jail.

SELF-LOVE, kept within due bounds, is a natural and uſeful ſentiment. It is, in truth, ſocial love too, as Mr. Pope has very juſtly obſerved: it is the ſpring of many good actions, and of no ridiculous ones. But ſelf-flattery is only the ape or caricatura of ſelf-love, and reſembles it no more than is abſolutely neceſſary to heighten the ridicule. Like other flattery, it is the moſt profuſely beſtowed,